

**United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Region IV  
POLLUTION REPORT**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 17, 2008

**From:** Kenneth Rhame

**Subject:** Initiation of Action

Lenoir Community College Mercury Spill  
231 Hwy 58 South, Kinston, NC

<b>POLREP No.:</b>	1	<b>Site #:</b>
<b>Reporting Period:</b>		<b>D.O. #:</b>
<b>Start Date:</b>	9/16/2008	<b>Response Authority:</b>
<b>Mob Date:</b>	9/16/2008	<b>Response Type:</b>
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>NPL Status:</b>
<b>Completion Date:</b>		<b>Incident Category:</b>
<b>CERCLIS ID #:</b>		<b>Contract #:</b>
<b>RCRIS ID #:</b>		

#### **Site Description**

US EPA received notification from the NRC (#884180) of a mercury release at Lenoir Community College. The release occurred in a chemistry lab when students broke a foot long laboratory thermometer. The students attempted to cleanup the mercury themselves. When the professor became aware, she notified appropriate school officials and a cleanup contractor (Eastern Environmental) was hired to perform cleanup. School Officials notified the North Carolina Dept. of Public Health (PHRST Team). The PHRST Team had concerns regarding clearance sampling, whether students may have contaminated their clothing or possibly "tracked" it out of the classroom, impacting other parts of the school. The PHRST Team advised the school to isolate the area, shut down the HVAC and to restrict access to the building until air monitoring could be conducted. PHRST Team member also advised that students involved in the cleanup should bag their clothes and bring them back to the school for screening. The PHRST Team member requested air monitoring assistance from US EPA, the EPA Region 4 phone duty officer mobilized NC OSC to the site. While EPA and PHRST Team member were en route, Eastern Environmental performed removal activities inside the lab, removing visible mercury.

#### **Current Activities**

Upon arrival and first assessment of the lab using a Lumex mercury vapor analyzer (while ventilation was shut down), concentrations of mercury vapor were observed in the breathing zone between 20 and 33 micrograms per cubic meter. Mercury vapor concentrations were observed in the spill area up to 60 micrograms per cubic meter. No visible mercury was observed. OSC screened two bags of students clothing and both were "clean" (below 1 microgram per cubic meter).

Air monitoring in the hallway indicated that the mercury had not been "tracked" out of the lab (concentrations were below 1 microgram/cubic meter).

The lab's emergency ventilation system (isolated to this lab and venting outdoors) was turned on. Air monitoring readings while emergency ventilation system was on was below the cleanup goal of 3 micrograms per cubic meter except in the spill area.

Breathing Zone 1.3 micrograms/cubic meter

Spill Area (Floor Level) 8 micrograms/cubic meter

Cove Base Molding 43 micrograms/cubic meter

#### **Planned Removal Actions**

The lab will continue to be vented overnight with the emergency ventilation system.

The room will be locked and isolated from student access.

On 9/17 Eastern Environmental will remove the Cove Base Molding and clean area with HgX.

#### **Next Steps**

NC Dept of Health PHRST Team will conduct a final screening.

#### **Estimated Costs \***

	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Total To Date</b>	<b>Remaining</b>	<b>% Remaining</b>
<b>Extramural Costs</b>				
<b>Intramural Costs</b>				
<b>Total Site Costs</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

\* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this

report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

[response.epa.gov/LenoirCommunityCollegeMercurySpill](http://response.epa.gov/LenoirCommunityCollegeMercurySpill)